

# Department of Human Services

Prepared by the  
DHS Office of  
Communications  
(517) 373-7394



## Articles in Today's Clips Friday, November 9, 2007

(Be sure to maximize your screen to read your clips)

<u>TOPIC</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
Child Abuse/Neglect/Protection	2-3
Domestic Violence	4-7
Health Care	8-10
Early Childhood Development	11-12
Food Assistance	13
Energy Assistance	14
Homelessness	15-16
2-1-1	17
Fraud	18

\*Important story at this spot



## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### **Girl found dead in cemetery**

Friday, November 09, 2007

BY CEDRIC RICKS

cricks@kalamazoogazette.com

388-8557

CONSTANTINE -- An 11-year-old Constantine girl reported missing Thursday night was found dead a few hours later in a cemetery less than mile from her home, police said.

Jodi Christine Parrack, a fifth-grader at Riverside Elementary School, was last seen around 4:45 p.m. Thursday visiting friends on East Third Street, about a block from downtown, said Constantine Police Chief Mark Honeysett.

The youngster was riding a bicycle and was due home by 5:30 p.m. Her mother reported her missing around 7 p.m., according to Honeysett.

A search began, and the girl's mother found her body around 10:32 p.m. in Constantine Township Cemetery, the police chief said.

"She was fully clothed," Honeysett said. "There is nothing to indicate what might have caused her death."

The girl's death is being treated as suspicious, he said.

An autopsy was scheduled for this morning.

"We hope that will give us a clue," the chief said. "We really don't have any idea how she died."

Honeysett said Jodi was wearing a black sweater over a black T-shirt, jeans and black tennis shoes. She had been riding a silver, Mongoose bicycle.

Jodi lived with her mother, Valerie Carver; stepfather, Kurt Carver; and two brothers.

A team of grief counselors was called to Riverside Elementary School this morning to help students and staff members.

Police are asking that anyone who may have seen Jodi during the time she was missing or who noticed activity in the cemetery during that time to call Constantine Police at (269) 435-4355 or St. Joseph County Central Dispatch at (269) 467-4195.

©2007 Kalamazoo

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **battlecreekenquirer.com**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

---

Article published Nov 9, 2007

Police: Body of girl, 11, found in southwest Michigan cemetery

*Associated Press*

CONSTANTINE, Mich. — Authorities say the body of an 11-year-old girl has been found in a cemetery in St. Joseph County.

Police tell WOOD-TV in Grand Rapids that Jodi Christine Parrack was reported missing Thursday night by her mother.

Authorities say she left the home of a friend about 4:45 p.m. on a silver bicycle.

Police searching for the girl found her body in Constantine Township Cemetery just after 10:30 p.m.

Police say they're treating the girl's death as suspicious. An autopsy was planned in Grand Rapids.

*Information from: WOOD-TV, [www.woodtv.com](http://www.woodtv.com)*

---

DETROIT

**Man, 31, found guilty in deaths of ex and baby**

November 9, 2007

BY L.L. BRASIER

FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Detroit's Jimmie Reed Jr. is to spend the rest of his life in prison after a jury found him guilty of shooting his ex-girlfriend to death in her Pontiac apartment, then setting their newborn baby on fire in an apparent attempt to avoid paying child support.

Both Reed's family and that of the victims, Markeda Byas, 31, and 2-month-old Arctavia Reed, cried as Judge Fred Mester pronounced Reed, 31, guilty of first-degree murder, felony murder, arson and using a firearm to commit a felony.

**Advertisement**

Mester, a judge for 26 years, struggled with his emotions as he delivered the verdict.

He said the 2-day trial showed that Reed killed Byas intentionally, and then returned several hours later and doused the bed where she and the baby lay with gasoline and set it on fire. The baby died of burns and smoke inhalation.

"He willfully and maliciously burned the dwelling for the purpose of covering up the murder he had committed," Mester said, as Reed sat with his head bowed. "All his actions subsequent to the killings show that there was only one person he was concerned about, and that person was Jimmie Reed Jr."

Outside the courtroom, one of Reed's family members fainted and paramedics were called.

Pontiac detective Darrin McAllister, a 15-year veteran who investigated the murders and obtained a confession from Reed two days later, still was shaken from the trial.

"I still have trouble sleeping at night," he said. "I still have a bad time with it."

Reed is scheduled to be sent to prison for life on Dec. 12.

Contact **L.L. BRASIER** at 248-858-2262 or [brasier@freepress.com](mailto:brasier@freepress.com).

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.freep.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071109/NEWS03/711090404>

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.



This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published November 9, 2007

---

## **Detroit man convicted in deaths of girlfriend, baby**

Morning update

Associated Press

PONTIAC, Mich. - A Detroit man who authorities say shot his girlfriend, then set her and their 2-month-old daughter on fire with hope of avoiding paying child support, is heading to prison for life.

An Oakland County judge on Thursday convicted 31-year-old Jimmie Reed Jr. of first-degree murder, felony murder, arson and using a firearm to commit a felony.

He was charged in the July 2006 deaths of 31-year-old Markeda Byas and 2-month-old Arctavia Reed in Pontiac. Authorities say Reed killed Byas, then returned and doused the bed where she and the baby lay with gasoline and set it on fire.

The baby died of burns and smoke inhalation.

Jimmie Reed faces the mandatory term of life in prison without parole when sentenced December 12th.

---

Copyright 2007 Lansing State Journal Use of this site signifies your agreement to the Terms of Service (updated August 2006)

[\[Back\]](#)



## Man guilty of murdering girlfriend, burning their baby alive

By ANN ZANIEWSKI  
Of The Oakland Press

A judge found Jimmie Reed Jr. of Detroit guilty of multiple counts -- including first-degree murder -- for shooting his girlfriend and then burning their baby girl alive.

He faces a mandatory sentence of life in prison.

Reed, 31, admitted to police that he shot his 31-year-old girlfriend, Markeda Byas, in the head as she slept in the early morning hours of July 20, 2006, at an apartment in Pontiac, saying it was an accident.

Prosecutors said Reed then placed 2-month-old Arctavia Reed in her dead mother's arms and returned hours later with gasoline, poured it on the baby, lit a match and continued to pour as the baby screamed.

"It is probably one of the most heinous homicides I've seen," Assistant Oakland County Prosecutor Barbara Morrison said.

Defense attorney Sanford Schulman argued that there was no evidence of premeditation, an element of first-degree murder.

He also said there was no evidence to refute Reed's claim that it was an accident.

But Morrison said the evidence showed that the loaded gun had to be pointed directly to Byas' head.

"That's called an execution," she said.

Morrison said -- and Oakland Circuit Judge Fred Mester agreed -- that Reed had ample time to pause and rethink his actions.

Morrison said that after Reed shot Byas, he took another woman to a doctor, went to another woman's house, took a nap and went to work.

Reed told police in an interview played in court that he went to a Meijer store on his work break and bought jogging pants and a T-shirt, into which he would later change.

He went back to Meijer after work and bought a gas can, gum and a water bottle.

Prosecutors said Reed filled the gas can and later poured the gas into the water bottle so as to not raise suspicion when he took it into Byas' apartment.

"My baby woke up," Reed said as he cried in the police interview. "I thought she was dead already."

Reed told police that he didn't touch the match to anything and said that fumes ignited. Morrison said evidence showed otherwise.

Byas, whose body also burned, died from the gunshot wound. Arctavia died from smoke and soot inhalation.

Morrison said that Reed -- who has children with other women -- became distant with Byas when she became pregnant and never fulfilled promises to pay her rent and move with her into a house in Detroit.

Reed opted for a bench trial, meaning that Mester, rather than a jury, would decide the case.

After closing arguments ended, Mester immediately issued his verdict: Reed was guilty of two counts of first-degree premeditated murder, one count of felony murder, arson and a felony firearms offense.

Byas' family and friends cried after the verdict was read. Outside the courtroom in the corridor, a woman Morrison identified as one of Reed's girlfriends collapsed. Emergency workers were called.

Reed will be sentenced Dec. 12.

Contact staff writer Ann Zaniewski at (248) 745-4628 or [ann.zaniewski@oakpress.com](mailto:ann.zaniewski@oakpress.com).

Click here to return to story:

[http://www.theoaklandpress.com/stories/110907/loc\\_20071109120.shtml](http://www.theoaklandpress.com/stories/110907/loc_20071109120.shtml)



## Political leaders showed wisdom on budget

Thursday, November 08, 2007

SPENCE MAIDLOW

and ANDY ALLEN

GUEST COLUMNISTS

Halloween 2007 was a bellwether date for Michigan. A landmark budget was finalized that reduced spending by \$400 million and keeps our state government operating.

Fortunately, additional cuts to doctors and hospitals were avoided by a thoughtful state administration and Legislature. One of the original targets for cuts by the Legislature was Medicaid, the medical program that provides health insurance for 1.5 million of Michigan's most vulnerable citizens.

Medicaid has suffered severe cuts in past years -- cuts that require Covenant and St. Mary's hospitals to annually subsidize the program by more than \$17 million. (In other words, Medicaid pays our hospitals \$17.2 million less than the actual cost of care.)

Covenant is a Lutheran church-sponsored hospital, and St. Mary's is a member of Ascension Health, the nation's largest Catholic and non-profit health care system. Both are blessed with boards of directors that take seriously the care of everyone in the region. Neither would deny necessary care to any patient, especially Medicaid patients.

In addition to subsidies for the Medicaid program, Covenant and St. Mary's annually write off \$3.5 million in bills that cannot be paid by their patients.

Although hospitals such as St. Mary's and Covenant have the resources to handle such losses, individual private practicing physicians do not.

As a result, the number of Michigan doctors who accept Medicaid has decreased to

64 percent today from 88 percent in 1999.

State Sen. Roger Kahn, Rep. Andy Coulouris and Gov. Jennifer Granholm have recognized these realities and supported Medicaid patients, as well as our local doctors and hospitals.

These political leaders need to be commended for standing firm in their support of our area's most vulnerable people. v

Spence Maidlow is president and chief executive officer of Covenant HealthCare. Andy Allen is president and chief executive officer of St. Mary's of Michigan.

©2007 Saginaw News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

This is a printer friendly version of an article from **battlecreekenquirer.com**  
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

[Back](#)

---

Article published Nov 8, 2007

GUEST COLUMNIST

President should not be afraid to put children first

With Halloween just behind us, a scary scenario is unfolding in Washington that could impact tens of thousands of Michigan children. The issue is health care coverage for our kids - specifically, reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program. Unfortunately, President Bush has already once vetoed bipartisan legislation put on his desk to ensure that uninsured children will have access to critical health care. Now he's threatening to do it again, even though a new bipartisan bill has passed both the House and Senate that addresses the concerns of the president and a vocal minority in Congress. The thought of President Bush and his stubborn allies in Congress putting their extreme views ahead of the needs of children and missing the extended deadline of Nov. 16 is frightening for all of us in south-central Michigan.

The Children's Health Insurance Program - known in Michigan as MI Child - covers 6.6 million children whose parents work but don't earn enough to afford health insurance. The bipartisan proposal that passed overwhelmingly in both the U.S. House and Senate would extend coverage to 3.4 million more children. Michigan has more than 100,000 children without health insurance, and this proposal may be their only chance at securing coverage. The fact that more than 120,000 Michigan children have lost employer-sponsored health insurance coverage over the past five years, according to the Michigan League for Human Services and the Washington, D.C.-based Economic Policy Institute, underscores the urgent need for the president's support of this bill.

Over the course of this debate, some have resorted to a series of myths to defend their opposition. The bill currently awaiting the president's signature, HR 3963, clarifies provisions already covered in the original proposal and leaves no doubt that this bill is focused on expanding health care for our children. It makes sure we are enrolling low-income children first by capping coverage at 300 percent of poverty, and even this level would only be allowed following federal approval of a waiver.

The bill further says that if the Social Security Administration cannot confirm an applicant's citizenship, the applicant will be required to provide the state with additional documentation to confirm eligibility. In other words, contrary to opponents' claims, illegal immigrants will not be allowed to receive this benefit. This new plan will also phase adults out of the program at an even faster pace, requiring them to be off the program within a year. Finally, it will minimize children moving from private insurance to this program.

Some have complained that this approach is too expensive, but in reality it will save our community, state and nation money in the long run because families without health coverage often turn to the more-expensive emergency room for care, passing on increased costs to others. It's true this version spends more than the president would like. But isn't a program that covers 10 million kids for five years for the same price tag as 40 days in Iraq worth it? It really is a question of our priorities.

I hope the president and Rep. Walberg listen to Republican colleagues like Michigan's own Vern Ehlers, Candice Miller and Fred Upton who have supported reauthorization of this program. Or Republicans like Sen. Pat Roberts who said, "I am not for excessive spending and strongly oppose the federalization of health care. And if the administration's concerns with this bill were accurate, I would support a veto. But, bluntly put, they are not."

Anything but speedy approval of this measure will be a cruel trick played on Michigan children when we can least afford it.

*Sen. Mark Schauer, D-Bedford Township, represents the 19th District in the Michigan Senate.*

---



## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### Everyone deserves stability of benefits

Friday, November 09, 2007

This week, the Michigan Supreme Court began hearing arguments in a case that could decide whether public entities can provide health care benefits to partners of gay and lesbian employees.

It's an emotional debate - sadly, in some cases, pitting those with a deep religious belief in the sanctity of heterosexual marriage against same-sex couples whose much-needed benefits help support their families.

In 2004, voters approved an amendment to the state constitution that banned same-sex marriages. At the time, we were concerned that the vague language of the amendment would result in the kind of legal wrangling we're seeing today. Our fears were realized - and the resulting court battle has caused great anxiety to those whose benefits are in jeopardy.

In an Other Voices essay published in The Ann Arbor News earlier this year, local artists John Gutoskey and Peter Sparling, a professor at the University of Michigan, wrote about their despair over the lower court decision. In addition to the financial aspect of the benefits, they wrote, "we are simply asking to be granted dignity and respect as human beings and fully contributing citizens of Michigan."

Julie Angeli, a preschool teacher at the Ann Arbor Public Schools who has three children with her partner, told The News this summer that she took the job because of the benefits for same-sex partners and their families. "My partner and I have been together 17 years," she said. "The greatest benefit I've ever given her is those benefits. Because of those benefits, she is a healthier person today."

There is a considerable difference between a religious definition of traditional marriage and the legal foundation of a civil union. And it's unclear whether people who cast their vote for a same-sex marriage ban intended to yank benefits offered to same-sex partners. That includes at least 375 couples statewide, who are employed by as many as 20 public universities, community colleges, school districts and local governments. (Private employers were not affected by the ruling.)

Institutions like U-M and the Ann Arbor Public Schools, which previously offered benefits to same-sex domestic partners, have since retooled their policies - now offering benefits to "qualified adults" - in a way that works around the lower court ruling. That means the Supreme Court ruling might ultimately prove irrelevant.

Either way, gay and lesbian domestic partners - and their children - should have the stability of these benefits. It's a battle they shouldn't have to wage.

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Collaborative looks to give county kids a great start

**GENESEE COUNTY**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Friday, November 09, 2007

**By Melissa Burden**

**mburden@flintjournal.com • 810.766.6316**

GENESEE COUNTY - A quarter of children under age 5 living in poverty. Higher than average prevalence of low-birthweight babies. Waiting lists for high-quality, publicly funded preschools.

It's no surprise that Genesee County faces its share of challenges in raising the next generation.

But a county collaborative that believes early childhood development is key to shaping a successful child and community is working to do something about it.

"Everyone has a role to move this agenda," said Jerry Johnson, spokesman for the Genesee Intermediate School District.

The Genesee County Great Start Collaborative's agenda includes things such as coordinating existing early childhood programs, expanding high-quality day care capacity, promoting awareness of programs and issues, and advocating for more early childhood programs and services.

Today, the collaborative was expected to release a 12-page report to the community on the status of young children in Genesee County.

It also wants to encourage area parents, residents and business and community leaders to commit to ensuring children before birth through kindergarten have a great start.

Collaborative officials say a successful first five years creates community investment for years to come. A child who is ready for kindergarten is more likely to graduate high school, has higher earnings potential and less likelihood of going to prison.

The collaborative has more than 120 members from business, religious, health care, child care and preschool social community groups across Genesee County.

"We're making an impact, and we are doing things to help young children," Johnson said.

There's also a parent coalition that is educating and connecting other Genesee County parents to available resources.

Several parent programs exist such as the free Ready, Set, Grow! Passport for children birth to kindergarten and a home visit program that checks to make sure children are reaching targeted milestones.

But more programming for young children is needed, said parent coalition member

### QUICK TAKE

#### Status Report

Some Genesee County statistics from the Genesee County Great Start Collaborative report to the community:

Children living in poverty: About 8,600 children under age 5 live in poverty.

Prenatal care: 16 of every 100 babies are born to mothers who didn't receive adequate prenatal care.

Mothers without education: 18 of every 100 babies are born to mothers without a high school diploma.

Grandparents raising children: 11,709 grandparents are raising grandchildren.

Higher than average abuse/neglect: Rates for abuse and neglect for county children birth to age 6 are nearly double the state average.

Genesee County Great Start Parent Coalition

Allery Hinds, 28, of Grand Blanc Township.

"We would like to see more programs for all children, not just based on your income," said Hinds, a stay-at-home mom of three children.

Ron Butler, executive director of Genesee County United Way, said parent education is huge. He said that even with health care coverage programs such as MIChild, there are still 18,000 uninsured children in Genesee County.

Businesses also can help, officials say, and one step is to provide quality, on-site child care for parents.

Mary Ann Ketels, director of 4C Child Care Unlimited, said ages birth to 5 are important learning years.

"If you miss that window of opportunity, it impacts for a lifetime," she said.

\*\*\*

This parent group of the Genesee County Great Start Collaborative meets 10-11:30 a.m. the second Friday of the month at the Genesee Intermediate School District's Health, Safety and Nutrition Services office, 2284 S. Ballenger Highway, Suite A, Flint Township. New members are welcome.

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Dinner to support food bank drive

News Update

**COLUMBIAVILLE**

**THE FLINT JOURNAL FIRST EDITION**

Friday, November 09, 2007

**By Holly Klaft**

**Journal Staff Writer**

COLUMBIAVILLE - What started as an offer to buy groceries for one needy family has grown into an effort to provide thousands of pounds of food to dozens more.

For more than 25 years, the Columbiaville United Methodist Church, 4696 Pine St., has opened its pantry doors to help feed hungry area residents.

On Saturday, parish members and pantry volunteers will celebrate their two-decades-long partnership with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan with a Swiss Steak Dinner fundraiser.

The 4-7 p.m dinner will be supported by funds from the men's and women's groups at the church. There is no cost to attend, but donations to help fund the pantry are requested.

Details: Columbiaville United Methodist Church, (810) 793-6363.

- Holly Klaft

\*\*\*

©2007 Flint Journal

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.

## Editorial: It's enough to warm cockles of your heart

It seems every year those least able to deal with rising home heating costs have to overcome an even bigger hurdle.

Luckily, across the state, weatherization programs are in place to help those who probably can't even make it from paycheck to paycheck with higher energy costs notwithstanding.

Oct. 30 was Weatherization Day in Michigan. In the Central Upper Peninsula, the Menominee-Delta-Schoolcraft Community Action Agency brings this invaluable program to area residents.

In 2002, the average household across the country spent about \$3,000 on energy for both car and home. In 2006, that amount was up to \$4,600 per year. And, in case you're living in an igloo, you may be surprised to learn this winter will be even more challenging.

Last year, the CAA in the Central U.P. helped 362 residents in 127 homes lower their heating costs by replacing windows and doors and putting in better insulation. The program's annual budget is a bit over \$418,000, with the great majority of its funding coming from federal grants.

A press release from the Michigan Community Action Agency Association (MCAAA) correctly points out that when 25 percent of household income is used to keep a family warm and to meet other energy needs, precious little is left over for rent, food, or medicine.

That's exactly the plight of many of Michigan's low income families and why Michigan's Community Action Agencies are leading the fight to reduce those costs through energy efficiency education and weatherization activities.

"Millions of energy dollars are wasted in Michigan in the homes of low-income families due to poor insulation, inefficient furnaces and deferred maintenance," said Jim Crisp of the MCAAA. "Our member agencies assist them with home improvements and client education that can keep those dollars from literally slipping through the cracks or up the chimney." Gov. Jennifer Granholm designated Oct. 30 as Weatherization Day in Michigan in recognition of the economic benefit the weatherization program has had since its inception in 1976. The Michigan Department of Human Services estimates low income families save \$275 to \$325 a year following weatherization improvements to their homes.

In addition, weatherization creates and supports jobs in Michigan. The local economy benefits because the local CAA utilizes local contractors and all materials for the program are purchased locally. CAA has contracts with three general contractors for the program. It utilizes various local businesses when installing major devices like furnaces, water heaters or refrigerators.

And it's not all about materials. The program also provides for education. Eligible clients receive instruction on understanding energy consumption and ways to stretch energy dollars. Participants also receive a home energy kit designed to help them become wise energy consumers.

Community is what it's all about, and we're lucky to have the Community Action Agency bringing this worthwhile program to our area.



## KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

### Homeless woman faces future with newborn triplets

Friday, November 09, 2007

BY TOM RADEMACHER

Gazette News Service

HASTINGS -- Monica Roberts will admit she has made mistakes. And she figures she probably will make more.

Just don't hold it against her three newborns -- triplets born last month to a woman who is broke, homeless and uncertain of her future and that of the tiny bundles she refused to abort or give up for adoption.

Roberts, 33, is taking it one tough day at a time as she ticks off the hours she has remaining at a Barry County shelter for women. She's still exhausted from a difficult pregnancy during which the father provided no help. She survived on virtually no money and had no place to call home.

"This is probably the worst-case scenario I've ever had," said Roberts' obstetrician, Dr. Thomas Balaskas, who specializes in high-risk pregnancies.

"We deal with many patients who are indigent, and have to rely on ... social services," said Balaskas, 49. "But this is the first time where we haven't had a home for a woman and her newborn children, to have their own roof over their heads."

Roberts gave birth Oct. 12 at Saint Mary's Health Care in Grand Rapids to daughter Grace and sons Noah and Jonathan. Complications required her to be hospitalized the last six weeks of a pregnancy that ran nearly 36 weeks.

All three babies were delivered by Caesarean section and spent two weeks in intensive care before their discharge Oct. 27. Medicaid paid most of the bills.

Before her hospitalization, Roberts lived with a friend, but the dwelling wouldn't suit newborns, especially now, since it has no working furnace.

When Balaskas discovered this week that the foursome was in a shelter with Monica's mother as well, he said, "I was appalled." The two women and triplets are living at Green Gables Haven, a Barry County facility whose address is kept secret because it sometimes houses abused women who require protection.

The residence is licensed for 14 beds, five of which are being occupied by Roberts, her three newborns, and their grandmother, Angela Cole, 50. Technically, they have about two weeks left on a policy allowing them to stay there 30 days. At that time, their case would be reviewed to determine how well they're helping themselves, explained Nyla Rounds, operations manager there.

Rounds and others at the shelter have been working feverishly to secure a more permanent residence for the five, but as Rounds noted, "Affordable housing is a big problem in Barry County."

Roberts dropped out but later graduated in 1995 from Middleville High School. She attended Davenport University for two years and then secured work as a medical transcriptionist.

Her life began to unravel just over a year ago in a perfect storm that resulted in the loss of her job, eviction from her Middleville apartment and debt that has grown to several thousand dollars.

One night last winter, feeling especially lonely, she said she visited a bar, met a 30-year-old single Grand

Rapids man with three children of his own, and engaged in unprotected sex.

Two months later, she gazed at a home pregnancy test strip turning positive and whispered, ``Oh my God, this just can't be."

Four months into her pregnancy, she underwent an ultrasound, and the technician pointed out not one, not two, but three tiny heads.

``I went into shock," Roberts said. She said that months ago, she called the man she believes to be the father, who hasn't called her back.

``I did think about abortion at the time, but it was just a thought," she said.

She rebuffs the idea of putting the children up for adoption. ``I'm just too close to them," she said Thursday, nuzzling little Jonathan's pink cheek.

``I wish I could have made some different decisions," she said. ``But I felt these babies were meant to be. I have a strong faith in God that He will see me through."

So far, it hasn't been easy, but she credits her mother, Balaskas and the staff at Green Gables.

Balaskas and his staff paid for a host of items Roberts needed during her pregnancy, and sprang for a stroller that accommodates all three babies.

``This is a woman who never regretted being pregnant with triplets," Balaskas said. ``She was never, `Woe is me.' She's a very loving mother."

©2007 Kalamazoo

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

### County extending reach of human services helpline

Consolidated center will serve 5 counties

Friday, November 09, 2007

**BY SUSAN L. OPPAT**

**The Ann Arbor News**

Washtenaw United Way is consolidating its 2-1-1 help line with the Southeastern Michigan Regional Call Center, a move that will make it the second-largest population in the country served by a single 2-1-1 help line.

"This is a prime example of regional collaboration," Washtenaw County Administrator Bob Guenzel said.

The consolidated call center will serve five counties : Washtenaw, Monroe, Wayne, Oakland and Macomb.

Livingston County 2-1-1, which was handled by the Ann Arbor call center, has elected to join another regional 2-1-1 call center.

Each of the five counties will retain its own advisory committee to regularly review the volume and types of calls taken the call centers in Ann Arbor, Taylor and Detroit, said Deb Bratkovich, Washtenaw United Way marketing director.

Bratkovich said callers will typically be connected to their local center, but each center can take overload calls and refer callers to services from a shared database.

The free, multilingual, 24-hour-a-day 2-1-1 system connects people with 5,000 local human service agencies.

Bratkovich said the top five requests at the Ann Arbor center are for rent assistance, utility assistance, shelters, food and medical care.

Washtenaw 2-1-1 is averaging 3,500 calls per month, while the Detroit and Taylor call centers average 20,000 combined calls per month, Bratkovich said.

The new call center will cover 4.5 million people - about 45 percent of the state's population based on 2000 statistics - second only to the Los Angeles center, Bratkovich said.

The partnership will reduce costs and provide regional data to governments and social service funders, Bratkovich said.

It still must be approved by the Michigan Alliance of Information & Referral Systems, which oversees database and compliance requirements, Michigan 2-1-1, and the Michigan Public Service Commission. Officials expect the approval will be granted by the spring.

Susan Oppat can be reached at [soppat@annarbornews.com](mailto:soppat@annarbornews.com) or at 734-482-1166.

©2007 Ann Arbor News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.



## Child care fraud hearing set

Friday, November 09, 2007

THE BAY CITY TIMES

A church secretary faces four years in prison for defrauding taxpayers out of \$45,939 for child care through the state Department of Human Services.

Officials arraigned Anita L. Clemons, 31, of Saginaw last week in Bay County District Court on a felony charge of welfare fraud greater than \$500.

Prosecutors contend Clemons collected payments from the state for 100 hours of baby-sitting services for each of her four children, ages 4 to 10.

Clemons indicated in her monthly statements to the Family Independence Agency that her aunt in Essexville baby-sat while she worked at Candle Light Baptist Church, 3309 Ruckle in Saginaw, and attended job training at Independent Bank in Essexville.

Investigators say the children were actually in their aunt's care for 20 hours a week.

The state paid a total of \$71,923 for Clemons' aunt to watch her children between June 2002 and December 2005, records show.

Clemons is free on her own recognizance awaiting an evidence hearing Friday, Nov. 16. v

©2007 Saginaw News

© 2007 Michigan Live. All Rights Reserved.